

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 L-03 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /080 W

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9426

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMEMBASSY KINSASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T COTONOU 0395

PARIS FOR MELONE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT PORG UNSC DM US

SUBJ: PROBABLE FINDINGS OF UN FACT FINDING MISSION

REF: COTONOU 0393

1. ALTHOUGH FINDINGS OF UN SPECIAL MISSION INVESTIGATING JANUARY
16 MERCENARY ATTACK ON BENIN BEING VERY CLOSELY HELD, WE HAVE
LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCES THAT EVIDENCE GATHERED TO DATE
SUGGESTS MOROCCO AND GABON WILL BE CITED AS THE PRINCIPAL

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COLLABORATORS IN ATTEMPTED COUP D'ETAT. APPARENTLY BENINESE
CALLED FOR UN INVESTIGATION SO THAT UN AND NOT BENIN ITSELF
WOULD BE ACCUSING THESE TWO COUNTRIES. WHILE COMPLICITY OF
"INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM" WILL NO DOUBT FIND A PLACE IN THE
MISSION'S REPORT, WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT ANY WESTERN
POWER (EG FRANCE) WILL BE DIRECTLY IMPLICATED IN COUP ATTEMPT.
INDIVIDUAL FRENCH CITIZENS MAY, HOWEVER, BE ACCUSED BY NAME.

2. AS RESULT OF SHEER VOLUME OF "EVIDENCE" PRODUCED BY BENINESE, SPECIAL MISSION HAS DELAYED ORIGINAL FEB 23 DEPARTURE BY TWO DAYS AND NOW PLANS TO DEPART FEB 25 VIA LAGOS. MISSION HAS ASKED TO HAVE REPORT DEADLINE EXTENDED UNTIL MARCH 8.

3. FROM WHAT WE CAN GATHER, MISSION WAS SHOWN TWO CADAVERS, ONE WHITE, ONE BLACK, BUT DID NOT INTERVIEW ANY PRISONER OTHER THAN SINGLE GUINEAN ALREADY KNOWN TO BE HELD.

4. COMMENT: WHILE BENINESE OFFICIALLY ROLLED OUT RED CARPET FOR FACT FINDING MISSION, SOME MISSION STAFF MEMBERS HAD TASTE OF GPRB'S POST-COUP D'ETAT PARANOIA. THREE MEMBERS OF TEAM WERE BRIEFLY ARRESTED BY SOLDIERS WHO SEEM TO BE UNDER ORDERS TO STOP ALL WHITES SEEN ON STREETS AFTER DARK. (FORTUNATELY, THEY RECEIVED BETTER TREATMENT THAN A BRITISH NATIONAL EMPLOYED BY A US FIRM HERE WHO WAS RECENTLY ARRESTED FOR WALKING AT NIGHT NEAR PRESIDENCY AND THEN FORCED TO STAND REST OF NIGHT IN CELL BY SOLDIERS WHO HIT HIM IF HE TRIED TO SIT OR LEAN AGAINST WALL.) SENIOR MEMBER OF UN SECRETARIAT STAFF HAD HIS CAMERA TAKEN FROM HIS BRIEF CASE DURING MEETING BY BENINESE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE TO UN PATRICE HOUNGAVOU. BENIN'S AMBASSADOR TO UN, BOYA, IMPLIED CAMERA WAS BEING USED FOR ESPIONAGE. INCIDENT, WHICH WAS RESOLVED BY APPROPRIATE PROTESTS AND APOLOGIES, IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR AND SUSPICION WHICH HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INTENSIFIED AT ALL LEVELS SINCE JAN 16 EVENTS. THOMPSON

SECRET

NNN

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